



## Office of Management's Monthly Newsletter

# The Beacon

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Office of Management  
Ronald Hicks, Deputy Administrator

May 2000  
Volume 3, Number 12  
web: [www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm)  
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**bea-con** (bê' ken) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or

### RON'S CORNER

#### **Management and Leadership Development Program To Push Ahead**

by Ron Hicks  
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It was recently announced that FSIS will launch the pilot phase of its new leadership development initiative: the Management and Leadership Development Program (MLDP). Citing the need for improved team leadership, supervision and management, the MLDP gets under way in April. The primary goal is to facilitate the transition from a command and control orientation in supervision and management to one of collaboration and conflict management; a change necessitated by the introduction of HACCP and similar trends in the contemporary business environment.

Eventually the MLDP will be open to virtually all employees. Phase one, however, is limited by necessity to members of designated intact workgroups. An intact workgroup is one composed of a manager/supervisor and his or her direct reports (subordinates). Its members frequently interact and are familiar with each other's work habits. These groups are the natural teams that comprise the Agency and carry out its mission.

Upon joining the MLDP, participants will engage in the 360° assessment process, receiving performance-based feedback from peers, supervisor, and subordinates, if any. While 360° assessment feedback is said to be powerful in and of itself, its primary benefit is to assist participants choose developmental opportunities that correspond to his or her particular leadership needs.

MLDP participants may enroll in a number of internally conducted leadership short courses, including collaboration in the workplace, coaching skills, conflict management, how to conduct effective meetings, how to conduct briefings, and others. Nine months following the conclusion of phase one, participants will again engage in 360° assessment. Aggregate assessment data will serve as the basis of a post program evaluation to determine the extent to which the Agency investment in the MLDP actually produced job related behavioral improvement.

#### **Air Monitoring Program**

by Don Musacchio  
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Office of Management  
Telephone: 202-720-4744

During the past 18 months, the FSIS Environmental Safety and Health Branch (EHSB), Administrative Services Division, has pursued an aggressive air monitoring program to attempt to identify and evaluate occupational exposure to FSIS

employees. Laurie Segna, Certified Industrial Hygienist, is leading this effort. Air monitoring involves the testing of workplace air to determine the presence and amount of various chemical contaminants. The primary focus of the program is to evaluate chemical exposures that may cause adverse health effects. The results of air monitoring surveys are compared to existing occupational health standards and guidelines, which include the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL) and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienist's (ACGIH), Threshold Limit Values (TLVs).

In poultry plants, the primary air contaminants include chlorine, ammonia, carbon dioxide, chlorine dioxide, chloramines and chlorine compounds. New on-line reprocessing systems have introduced chemicals such as trisodium phosphate (TSP) and acidified sodium chlorite. Other chemicals such as ozone and peroxyacetic acid may be used in the future for pathogen reduction. Meat plants also use several chemicals as carcass washes. These include acetic acid, citric

#### ***In This Issue...***

Workforce of the Future –  
Page 2  
VDIP – Page 4  
Safety and Health – Page 4  
Human Resources – Page 5

acid, lactic acid, and chlorine. Other contaminants may include dusts, food coatings and spices, exhaust gases, and various microbiological organisms.

This article will kick off a monthly series of articles on the FSIS air monitoring program. It will include profiles on the types of chemicals used in poultry and meat plants as well as updates on new air sampling methods. The chemical profiles will provide information on how the chemical is used, the health effects associated with exposures to the chemical, exposure limits, air sampling methods, and exposure reduction control measures. Each month a different chemical will be featured.

If you have questions about this program, please contact Laurie on Outlook or telephone at 301-504-4249.

## WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

### **Workforce of the Future Focus on: Status of Agency Initiatives with Impact on the Workforce**

*by: Yvonne Davis, Chair  
Workforce of the Future Steering  
Committee  
Telephone: 202-720-6617*

The Workforce of the Future Steering Committee is currently monitoring the activities of 17 initiatives, projects, or functions with workforce planning implications. Some initiatives have been in progress for some time, others are more recent. These initiatives will help define the future roles and responsibilities of employees in our major occupations along the farm to table continuum.

One of the Committee's most critical functions is to ensure that FSIS employees are kept informed of the status of program initiatives and how they may impact our workforce.

Having representatives of the NJC, the NAFV, and the ATSP on the Steering Committee is very important for that reason.

Maintaining regular communication with employees during this time of rapid change and continuous improvement, while essential is challenging. Since employees are bombarded with information in their work and personal lives and need to make decisions about what to read, the Committee thought that a brief update on several key initiatives would be useful.

### **GS-696 Consumer Safety Officer (CSO) Introduction**

In FY 1999 the Agency advertised 30 CSO positions in six metropolitan areas. The Agency subsequently cancelled the vacancy announcements consistent with a provision in the FY2000 appropriations bill for USDA. In that provision, Congress expressed concern about the cost, particularly relocation costs, associated with the introduction of the Consumer Safety Officer occupation into the FSIS workforce. Congress also asked for a report by February 15, 2000. A copy of the report will be sent to all employees shortly.

In that report and in subsequent briefings for congressional staff, FSIS has described our plan to minimize cost to the Agency and disruption to employees by advertising vacancies only in local commuting areas where there are an adequate number of qualified candidates for the CSO position. The Agency hopes to fill 50-75 CSO positions with qualified FSIS employees before the close of FY 2000 and an additional 50-75 CSO positions in FY 2001. The Agency will engage in impact bargaining with the National Joint Council on implementation.

### **FSIS Veterinary Medical Officer of the Future Task Force**

The final Report on the Veterinarian of the Future Task Force will be issued shortly. The Report includes proposed duties that veterinarians can perform in addition to their current inplant duties to more fully utilize their scientific expertise along the farm-to-table continuum. The Task Force's next step is to develop methods for accomplishing some of the proposed duties without compromising the accomplishment of inplant duties.

Under a separate initiative, classification criteria for grading VMO positions in high pathology plants to the GS-12 level, developed by the Agency, recently were approved by the Department for application within FSIS.

### **HACCP-based Inspection Models Pilot**

Currently, 24 plants are participating in the HACCP Inspection Models Project - 16 that slaughter young chickens, 5 that slaughter market hogs, and 3 that slaughter young turkeys. No beef plants are participating in the project at this time. Microbiological and organoleptic data are being captured at each plant by an independent contractor before and after a plant transitions to the new plant controls and slaughter inspection procedures. The achievements of the new system must meet or exceed the achievements of the current system as reflected by the baseline data in order for FSIS to consider the system successful. A public meeting was held in March 2000 where baseline data was presented on the 16 young chicken plants. The Agency expects to publish a proposed rule on performance standards for young chicken plants in summer 2000 and, pending successful conclusion of the rulemaking process and impact bargaining with the NJC, could implement the model in

approximately 200 additional plants slaughtering young chickens by the beginning of FY 2002.

### **GS-1862 Consumer Safety Inspector Occupation**

Approximately 2,700 non-line food inspectors were converted to consumer safety inspectors during the three years of HACCP implementation. Of those, approximately 460 were also upgraded. Inspectors who have been temporarily assigned to oversight and verification duties in HACCP Models plants were among those upgraded. The Agency and the National Joint Council are engaged in impact bargaining on the conversion to this series.

### **Future Roles and Responsibilities for FSIS Compliance Officers Task Force**

The Agency is aggressively focusing on ways to improve food safety along the farm-to-table continuum. One of the efforts in this regard is the formation of a working group to recommend options for future roles and responsibilities of Compliance Officers. This group, composed of headquarters and field employees, began meeting early in 1999 and later suspended efforts pending the outcome of an Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of the Compliance Program that began in 1999. While the official OIG audit report isn't expected to be released until early summer, FSIS officials were briefed on audit findings in April. The working group resumed efforts in May 2000 and is expected to issue a report later this year.

### **In-Distribution Inspection Pilot.**

FSIS implemented an In-Distribution Inspection Pilot in February 2000 with eleven GS-1862 Consumer Safety Inspectors. The pilot was implemented in four district offices (Minneapolis MN, Philadelphia PA, Beltsville MD, and Lawrence KS) and training took place in January-February 2000. Inspectors are

performing some of the functions currently performed by FSIS Compliance Officers. These tasks include conducting reviews, recall effectiveness checks, collecting *E.coli* samples, and responding to consumer complaints. Consumer Safety Inspectors are not performing any enforcement activities during the pilot. All enforcement work is performed by Compliance Officers. A formal evaluation of the pilot is planned later this year.

### **Training and Education Committee 2001 (TEC 2001).**

The Agency has received a letter from Senator George Voinovich, Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government, Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia, requesting information on employee training budgets and activities in FSIS. Sen. Voinovich states in his letter that he firmly believes that Federal employees must have the proper training and skills to maximize their talents and really make a difference in the lives of the American people. The Senator is interested in FSIS training and education activities including the appropriation figures for training for the past 4 years, our forecasted budget for Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002, costs of training, the number of employees who received training, and agreements with outside contractors such as colleges and universities to provide training. Peggy Nunnery, Director of the TEC-2001 Project, has primary responsibility for preparing the Agency's response to Sen. Voinovich, which is due May 15.

In relation to Agency training and education, a letter was issued to Office of Field Operations (OFO) field employees on April 13th, advising them that a modest increase in funding had been provided for the Continuing Education (CE) Program. Therefore, OFO will be processing those requests currently on file as well as those submitted in the future. Unfortunately, based on the

number of requests received to date, there is a strong possibility that the additional funds may not cover all requests submitted this fiscal year. The CE program directly supports the Agency goal of a better educated, more scientific workforce. Thus it will be given serious consideration for additional funding if more funding becomes available.

*The following are more recent initiatives that the WOF Steering Committee is studying to assess possible impact on the FSIS workforce.*

### **Interstate Shipment**

In the future, FSIS employees may work more closely with state and local food safety officials. Legislation currently before Congress would accelerate that. In November 1999 Secretary Glickman transmitted to Congress a draft bill on Interstate Shipment of State-Inspected Meat and Poultry Products. The key objective of the bill is to eliminate the prohibition on the interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry products and ensure that all meat and poultry products produced in the U.S. are inspected under a seamless inspection system. The bill was introduced into legislation as the "New Markets for State-Inspected Meat Act." Hearings were held in March 2000.

### **Randomized Processing Inspection**

The Agency's FY 2001 budget request included a proposal to inspect meat and poultry processing establishments using a daily, randomized, unscheduled approach that factors in risk. The development of risk-based criteria, public dialogue and completion of rulemaking would all be necessary before implementation of randomized processing inspection. The Agency would also engage in impact bargaining with the National Joint Council on implementation.

## Internet Access

The Administrator has a strong desire to provide Internet access to the field workforce. The Steering Committee is preparing an analysis on the costs and benefits of such access.

## VDIP

### Conflict Management Workshop

by Milo Christianson

Telephone: 612-370-2000

Kathy Welsh

Telephone: 202-720-5657

Labor and Employee Relations  
Division

On December 21, 1998, Secretary Glickman issued Secretary's Memorandum 4090-2, USDA Conflict Management Policy Statement. This statement specifies that Agency Heads will "ensure that all managers and supervisors receive training to achieve a basic level of competency in conflict management skills."

To meet the requirement set forth in the Secretary's memorandum, the Agency has developed a Conflict Management Workshop. Development of the Workshop was a collaborative project of the Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP), the Organization and Employee Development Branch and the FSIS Training Center. The primary purpose of the Workshop is to build skills needed to deal successfully with conflict situations arising in the workplace. Those who attend will be given an opportunity to enhance or develop such skills as managing conflict, active listening, giving and receiving feedback, and other skills related to the competencies in our Agency's recently announced Management and Leadership Development Program. Among the subjects covered will be the following:

- *The Nature of Conflict.* This segment of the training deals

with the nature of conflict – what it is, how it begins, and how it escalates. It gives participants a framework for looking at and dealing with conflict.

- *Conflict Resolution Styles.* This segment looks at how people approach conflict – their resolution style. There are several possible styles, but all of us have at least one that is dominant. Participants are given an opportunity to identify their dominant style(s) and to learn how to use, and react to, other styles.
- *Active Listening.* Perhaps the ability that is most critical to successful conflict resolution is the ability to listen. This segment emphasizes active listening – listening in which the listener is an active participant in the conversation. Various exercises are used to discuss, demonstrate and build active listening skills.
- *Conflict Resolution.* Participants are introduced to a process that they can use to resolve conflicts in which they are involved. They are then given an opportunity to practice this process, incorporating information discussed earlier in the class.

Based on available resources, our efforts for the remainder of this fiscal year will be devoted primarily to the training of field supervisors. In the districts, our goal will be to train as many supervisors as possible down through the circuit level. As resources and time become available in the future, we will extend the training to other employees.

If you would like further information regarding the Conflict Management Workshop, or if you would like to schedule a Workshop at your location, please contact Robert Zimmermann, Room 3807-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington, DC 20250. His telephone number is 202-720-4937 and his fax number is 202-690-2040.

## OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

### Safety and Health Directives— Required Actions and Postings

by Roger Bates, Chairperson  
Des Moines, Chicago, Madison, and  
Pickerington Multi-District Safety  
and Health Committee  
Office of Field Operations  
Telephone: 319-262-2231

There are numerous actions that must be taken and forms or documents completed and posted to comply with the FSIS safety and health directives at meat, poultry, and egg products establishments. To aid the field inspection workforce, our committee has summarized these requirements, and they can be found in Attachment 1 to this edition of the *Beacon*. Contact the Field Safety and Health Specialist assigned to your District for more information about these issuances.

### FSIS Hazard Communication Program

by G. Ray Kobaly  
Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 404-562-5961

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) that was issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is based on the concept that employees have both a need and a right to know the hazards and identities of the chemicals to which they are exposed at the workplace. The FSIS Hazard Communication Program (HCP), which is addressed in FSIS Directive 4791.5, covers employees in meat, poultry, import, and egg products plants. FSIS employees who are engaged in the laboratory use of chemicals are not covered by the HCS; however, they are covered by the OSHA Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories Standard. In addition, office workers who encounter

chemicals only in "non-routine" isolated instances are not covered by the HCS. As an example, an office worker who occasionally changes toner in a copying machine is not covered by the HCS.

The IIC or Supervisor is the overall coordinator of the FSIS HCP for FSIS employees in each official establishment. All FSIS employees assigned to an establishment will be apprised of the requirements of the OSHA HCS and the FSIS HCP. They will be informed of the physical and health hazards of the chemicals used at the plant and the measures to protect themselves from these chemicals.

In accordance with the HCS, the plant and FSIS are responsible for identifying and maintaining a list of all hazardous chemicals used in the plant and informing each other of any changes to the lists. Both the plant and FSIS must have a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for every hazardous chemical on their chemical lists, and these MSDS's must be readily accessible to employees during their workshift. Additionally, in-plant containers of hazardous chemicals must be properly labeled. The plant is responsible for ensuring that all hazardous chemicals procured by the plant are labeled and the IIC or Supervisor is responsible for the labeling of FSIS hazardous chemicals.

Portable containers into which hazardous chemicals are transferred from labeled containers and that are intended for the only for the immediate use by the employee who makes the transfer do not have to be labeled.

FSIS inspection personnel will receive initial generic HCP training at orientation. They will receive specific training from the IIC or Supervisor about the hazardous chemicals used at the workplace when they report there. Additional training will be provided whenever a

new chemical is introduced to the workplace.

The Hazard Communication training program will consist of the following:

- Hazard Communication Today Video Tape;
- Hazard Communication Booklet; and
- MSDS Pocket Dictionary.

The IIC or Supervisor will provide training and information on the following:

- Location of the list of chemicals used at the plant;
- Location and access to MSDS's;
- Methods to detect hazardous chemicals such as visual appearance or odor;
- Methods to protect employees from chemical hazards; and
- Chemical labeling systems used at the plant.

(The District Office and the IIC or Supervisor will maintain records of employee HCP training.)

The IIC or Supervisor and a representative of plant management will sign Attachment #1 of FSIS Directive 4791.5. The signed attachment will be posted in the government office.

### **Safety and Health Videos**

*by Tom Wright*

*Administrative Services Division*

*Telephone: 301-504-4246*

The following videos have been added to the lending library maintained by the FSIS, Continuing Education and Distance Learning Center at College Station, Texas:

- Lockout/Tagout for Affected and Authorized Employees, 16:00 minutes (min.)
- Defensive Driving and Road Rage, 13 min.
- Hazard Communication 2000, 26 min.
- Ergonomics 2000 (Computers and Workstations), 13 min.

- Computer Usage, 10 min.
- Video Display Terminal Safety, 12 min.
- Office Ergonomics, 17 min.
- Hearing Conservation (Bite Video), 5:50 min.

To borrow a copy, contact:

HRDS, Continuing Education and Distance Learning Center  
Crystal Park Plaza  
2700 E. Bypass 6, Suite 1600  
College Station, TX 77845-5015  
fax: 409-260-9579  
e-mail: Bob.Burke@usda.gov

### **Safety Decals**

*by Betsy Kogan*

*Administrative Services Division*

*Telephone: 301-504-4250*

We will soon be distributing through the Circuit Supervisors the safety decals for calendar year 1999. As you may recall, the FSIS self-certified Safety Decal Program recognizes inspection employees who achieve a milestone of injury-free time. If you submitted an application for inclusion in the program during CY99 or if you achieved a 5-year increment, you will be receiving a decal for your safety helmet and a memo certifying your accomplishment. Consult FSIS Notice 27-87 for more information about this program. If you would like to receive a certification form, contact the Field Safety and Health Specialist assigned to your District.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Changes in Positions and Grade and Pay Retention**

*Human Resource Field Office*

*Telephone: 612-370-2000*

A number of circumstances can significantly impact the work of an organization or the content of specific positions. Among these are changes in the work of the regulated industry or the desire by managers to organize differently or to realign work in ways to enhance efficiency

or the cost-effectiveness of operations. These specific circumstances can affect grade levels of positions and employee entitlements.

When one of the above circumstances cause a position to be downgraded, formal Reductions-in-Force (RIF's) are avoided whenever possible by using work reduction procedures described in FSIS Directive 4300.1. In work reduction situations, the affected individuals are reassigned to vacant positions at the same grade and salary. Employees affected by a work reduction may also be offered a lower graded position, generally in the commuting area, and will receive pay retention in those situations.

Both grade and pay retention may be granted only when a formal RIF has caused the affected employee to be placed in a lower graded position, when a position is reclassified at a lower grade because of the application of a new OPM Classification Standard, or to correct a classification error or gradual erosion of duties over time. Reduction in the level of complexity caused by changes in industry operation which results in a change to a lower grade is not considered a reclassification action. Rather, they are processed under the "work reduction" procedures mentioned above.

The policy guidance addressing these issues may be referenced in FSIS Directive 4536.1, Revision 2, entitled "Grade and Pay Retention." Should you have other specific questions about work reduction situations or entitlements to grade and pay retention, please refer them through channels to your Servicing Personnel Office.

#### **Leave Without Pay (LWOP) Reminder**

Employees considering the use of Leave Without Pay (LWOP) should carefully review FSIS Directive

4630.2, Part Four, for specific guidance. LWOP must be requested and approved BEFORE an employee may be placed in this temporary non-pay status. Since the level of approval required varies with the length of the LWOP period requested, a written request should be forwarded well in advance of the requested effective date to allow movement of the request through supervisory and administrative channels. If the LWOP request is due to medical complications, supporting medical documentation should be submitted with the request.

#### **Leave Transfer Recipients**

1. Jackie Copeland  
OFO, DC; Illness
2. Annie Stewart  
POB, MN; Serious Illness
3. Linda Cole  
OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness
4. Sonya West  
OPPDE, DC; Maternity
5. Joyce Schultz  
POB, MN; Serious Illness
6. Stephanie Showell  
OFO, DE; Family Illness
7. Michael Schwochert  
OFO, CO; Surgery
8. Linda Carey  
EMS, DC; Surgery
9. Nancy Clyburn  
OPHS, DC; Surgery
10. George Olson  
OFO, MN; Family Illness
11. Marilyn Weber  
FPC, IA; Illness
12. Robert Martz  
OFO, IA; Serious Illness
13. Betty Morgan  
OFO, AR; Family Illness
14. Carolyn Woolfolk  
OFO, DC; Surgery
15. OFO-99-0027\*  
OFO, NC, Surgery
16. Theresa Spoering  
OFO, MN; Surgery
17. OFO-99-0034\*  
OFO, SD; Family Illness
18. Maureen Murphy  
OFO, OK; Surgery
19. Tammy Love  
OFO, AR; Surgery
20. Sue Engels

- OFO, IA; Family Illness
21. Michael Craig  
OFO, NE; Family Illness
22. Nicole Wareham  
OFO, IN; Maternity
23. Michelle Long  
OM, DC; Surgery
24. Glenda Snyders  
OFO, KS; Surgery
25. Angela Cuello  
OFO, TX; Serious Illness
26. Mona Eder  
OFO, IL; Maternity
27. Aurbrey Tribble  
OFO, FL; Serious Illness
28. Jacqueline Bonner  
OFO, AL; Surgery
29. Denise Bassell  
FPC, IA; Illness
30. John French  
OFO, GA; Family Illness
31. Victor Varnadoe  
OFO, OH; Family Illness
32. OFO-99-0049\*  
OFO, MA; Surgery
33. Tommie Olson  
OFO, NE; Surgery
34. Clement Grangier  
OFO, MD; Serious Illness
35. OFO-99-0047\*  
OFO, IA; Surgery
36. Mark Spear  
OFO, AL; Surgery
37. Dunita Harris  
OFO, TX; Maternity
38. James Layman  
OFO, OH; Serious Illness
39. Karen Wesson  
OFO, DC; Surgery
40. Brandy Blevins  
OFO, CA; Serious Illness
41. Vandora Hampton  
OFO, VA; Serious Illness
42. OFO-00-0006\*  
OFO, AL, Illness
43. Madge Stone  
OFO, DC; Family Illness
44. Carmen Torrent  
OM, DC, Illness
45. OFO-00-0007\*  
OFO, AL; Surgery
46. Jamie Zysset  
FO, KS; Maternity

\*While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so

that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-720-6287.

### **Expanded Use of Excused Absence for Organ Donation**

On September 24, 1999, President Clinton signed Public Law (PL) 106-56, The Organ Donor Leave Act which increases the amount of excused absence (i.e., administrative leave) from 7 to 30 days each calendar year that Federal employees may use to serve as organ donors. The amount of excused absence available for bone-marrow donation purposes remains at 7 calendar days each year.

The Act is intended to enhance the Federal government's leadership role in encouraging organ donations by increasing the number of days of excused absence for employees who donate organs. Recent surveys of doctors and hospitals indicate that the 7 days of excused absence, which are currently allowed are insufficient to cover organ donation surgery and recovery.

FSIS Notice 4-96, dated 1/31/96, "Expanded Use of Sick Leave, Excused Absence, and Leave Without Pay" which addresses this subject will be updated to reflect the increased entitlement. Questions should be directed to the Classification and Compensation Branch, HRD at 202-720-6287.

### **Progress Reviews (A-L Bargaining Unit Employees)**

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXI, Section B, periodic reviews between a bargaining unit employee and the rating supervisor shall take place every 4 months during the appraisal period. One of these reviews shall

also coincide with the discussion of the annual performance rating. Therefore, for A-L employees, grades 1-12, the first 4-month review must be completed by July 1.

In conducting these reviews, refer to the progress review checklist in any User's Guide for specific points to cover in the discussion with the employee. Employee and supervisor should initial and date block 16 of the FSIS 4430-5 form to certify completion of the progress review discussion.

### **Performance Standards (M-Z)**

For the M-Z employees, grades 1-12, supervisors need to establish new standards no later than May 31, 2000, which will cover the rating period May 1, 2000, to April 30, 2001. To establish standards, supervisors discuss with the employee the new performance elements/standards. For most employees who are covered by Users' Guides, the elements and critical designations are preprinted on FSIS Form 4430-5. For employees not covered by Users' Guides, the standards are established by completing FSIS Form 4430-6, using FSIS Form 4430-5 as a coversheet. Once the required signatures are obtained, a copy of the form should be given to the employee and a copy submitted through channels to the Servicing Personnel Office. (Bargaining Unit employees only)

### **Federal Income Tax Withholding – W-4**

Now that you have finished filing your tax returns, do you want to change the number of exemptions? Is it too much federal tax being withheld or not enough? Before you decide to submit a new W-4, check your earnings statement for what is currently being withheld from your salary check.

The only employees who are required to file a new W-4 are those that claim exempt from Federal tax

withholding. Those employees (usually from Puerto Rico) must file a new W-4 at the beginning of the year or the National Finance Center will change the Federal tax withholding to \$00, single with 0 exemptions.

IRS regulations can be very complicated, so you may wish to refer to IRS publications and worksheets which may be obtained at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling toll free 1-800-829-3676. If you decide to make a change, a W-4 may be submitted directly to your Servicing Personnel Office in Minneapolis, MN (field employees) or Washington, DC (headquarters employees) at any time.

### **The Government May Owe You Money!!**

"The Earned Income Credit is a special credit for certain people who work." So begins the compelling 27-page IRS publication 596, Earned Income Credit. (And you thought that government bureaucrats didn't have much literary talent!!)

Here are the basics on the Earned Income Credit. In 1998, if you earned less than \$26,473 and have one qualifying child living with you, OR you earned less than \$30,095 and have more than one qualifying child living with you, OR you earned less than \$10,030 and do not have a qualifying child living with you, THEN you may be able to get the Earned Income Credit. You also may be able to get the Advanced Earned Income Credit in your paycheck. You would need to be eligible, fill out Form W-5, Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate, and mail the form to your Servicing Personnel Office in Minneapolis, MN (field employees) or Washington, DC (headquarters employees). The personnel office could then include part of the credit regularly in your pay.

If you think you may be eligible, you probably still need more information. The full publication, and other IRS



information, may be obtained on their web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-829-3676.

### **Outreach Contacts with Prospective Food Inspector and VMO Applicants**

For entry-level field Food Inspector and Veterinarian positions, the appropriate office to receive completed applications is the Human Resource Field Office, Human Resource Systems Section, located in Minneapolis, MN. This office provides prospective applicants with application materials upon request and, to aid in this process, has created a 1-800 phone number (1-800-370-3747) whereby individuals may call and provide their name, mailing address, phone number, and the type of application packet being requested. In addition, an Internet email address has been established for application material requests: [jesgar@ag.gov](mailto:jesgar@ag.gov), and copies of application material have been placed on HRD's Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/hrd/default.htm> for viewing or downloading.

In addition, local supervisors and employees often have the unique opportunity to interact with individuals who may be considering Federal employment. The Human Resource Systems Section distributes quantities of both intermittent and full-time Food Inspector application packets to District Managers and, through them, down to plant IIC's to assist in these outreach contacts. For the process to work efficiently, it is vital that only current and complete application packets are provided to potential candidates for employment. The contents of the Food Inspector and Veterinarian application packets are summarized below to help local officials be assured that they have only up-to-date and complete information on hand. If you have questions, please contact Tom Reimler at 612-370-2000.

### **Veterinary Medical Officer Application Packet**

To receive a Veterinary Medical Officer information and application packet, please call the USDA/FSIS Human Resource Field Office, Human Resource Systems Section at 1-800-370-3747. Included in this application packet will be:

- An introduction letter
- An information letter describing the career opportunities in veterinary medicine
- An information letter describing veterinarian employment opportunities
- An Applicant Supplemental Sheet (Form AD-1086)
- A letter describing the elements required to be considered for veteran's preference
- The Veterinary Medical Officer Competition Notice booklet
- An Optional Application for Federal Employment (Form OF-612)

An applicant for a Veterinary Medical Officer may choose no more than nine geographical areas in which to work. There is no exam required for this position. The applicant must submit either the OF-612 or a resume describing their qualifications, along with the Employment Availability Statement on the back cover of the competition notice booklet.

### **Food Inspector Application Packets**

#### *Full-Time Food Inspector*

To receive a Full-time Food Inspector information and application packet, please call the USDA/FSIS Human Resource Field Office, Human Resource Systems Section at 1-800-370-3747. Included in this application packet will be:

- An introduction letter

- A letter describing the elements to be considered for veteran's preference
- An addendum to Food Inspector/Veterinary Medical Officer Competition Notice describing CTAP & ICTAP elements for displaced/surplus Federal and USDA employees
- The Food Inspector Competition Notice booklet
- An information sheet describing the functional requirements and environmental factors
- An information sheet describing the career opportunities of a food inspector
- A Food Inspector Questionnaire
- Optional Application for Federal Employment (Form OF-612)
- A testing schedule of the current quarter with a test card

To be considered for a position as a Full-time Food Inspector, the applicant must meet the qualifications listed on page two of the Competition Notice booklet. The applicant must also take the food inspector exam, which consists of general knowledge with some mathematics. The exam is roughly three to four hours long. The Food Inspector applicant must send either the Food Inspector Questionnaire, or the OF-612, or a resume describing their qualifications, along with the test card indicating a current testing site, postmarked before the indicated deadline on the test schedule.

#### *Intermittent Food Inspector*

To receive an Intermittent Food Inspector information and application packet, please call the USDA/FSIS Human Resource Field Office, Human Resource Systems Section at 1-800-370-3747. Included in this application packet will be:

- An introduction letter
- A letter describing the intermittent tour of duty



- An information sheet describing the functional requirements and environmental factors
- An information sheet describing the basic qualifications
- A listing of the geographical codes for the five areas that you wish to work
- An Optional Application for Federal Employment (Form OF-612)

To be considered for a position as an Intermittent Food Inspector, the applicant is not required to take the food inspector exam. The applicant can choose up to five geographical areas in which to work. Please note that these geographical codes are not the same as the codes used for Full-time Food Inspector. The nature of this position is "on-call" and not a permanent position.

### General Application Preparation Tips

The following information is provided for use in preparation of applications for vacancies under FSIS Directive 4335.1. The following is based on information in those Directives, as well as comments from panel members who review applications for promotion. Please refer to the Directive for more information on preparing your application

- Make sure to address the correct job elements. A maximum of two, one-sided pages per element are allowed. Additional pages will not be considered.
- Describe work experience, education, training and awards that apply to the knowledge, skill or ability listed in the job element. Give specific and accurate examples to illustrate your knowledge of the element. Do not hesitate to list multiple examples as long as they do not exceed two pages. Most importantly *address the element*. Do not include unnecessary information.

- All elements should be addressed individually. Do not repeat the same text in every element, or make references to previous elements (e.g., "see element A"). It does not reflect your true ability when the same information is repeated for each element. Address the elements using your experience as it relates to each element.
- Specify courses taken by name.
- Document pre-USDA experience in the section "outside experience." Only experience gained while employed with USDA should be recorded in the "work experience" section.
- Check spelling for accuracy.
- Do not capitalize all letters when submitting a promotion application. It makes the copy very difficult to read, because the print will blend together.
- Make sure that there is a new ribbon in the typewriter or printer being used. If the ink is not dark enough, it is very difficult to read.
- Choose a 'readable' font if using a computer. If the font is too small, an application can be eliminated due to being illegible. It is very difficult to read text that is too small. The elimination of some information would be more acceptable than trying to get too much information on two pages.
- If possible, do not write the Application for Promotion by hand.
- If the FSIS Form 4335-1 is not used, please make sure that all information requested on the original form is included. Computer generated forms may be used, if *all* required information is included on the computer generated form.
- Submit a copy of your most recent performance rating (not more than 15 months old) along with your completed application.

If you have questions concerning application requirements related to

specific vacancies, please direct your inquiries to the contact person listed in the vacancy announcement.

### Additional Tips Specific to Inspector Positions

- Include type of assignment, species slaughtered and/or type of processing (for example: curing, smoking, breeding, pork sausage, canning, etc.) when describing experience.
- Do *not* include supervisor's names, establishment numbers, etc.
- List *all* training and education as it applies to each specific element.

### Renewing Applications

(For Open Continuous Announcements)

Applications are valid for a period of five years. To maintain eligibility for five years, a copy of the current performance rating of record must be submitted each year by July 1, (for last names beginning A-L) or Oct 1, (for last names beginning M-Z). After five years, a new application must be submitted to continue to receive consideration for recurring vacancies. GS-1862 positions are currently not in the recurring vacancy system and must be announced until negotiations on the implementation and impact of the 1862 series with the NJC have been completed, which includes the Agency proposal on inclusion of this series into the recurring system.

### VMO/SVMO Open Continuous Vacancy Announcement

Field veterinarians interested in promotion to GS-12 positions are reminded that they can submit an application for consideration at any time to the nationwide open continuous vacancy announcement, Announcement Number FSIS-M-23(97), maintained in HRFO in Minneapolis. This announcement is used to fill all GS-701-12 field positions throughout the U.S.

Separate announcements are not issued for specific locations.

One application can be submitted to request consideration for multiple locations. Applications are maintained in HRFO and referred to District Offices, when requested by the District. Applications remain on file for up to 5 years, provided the employee submits a current performance appraisal annually. Contact Bonnie Falk or Darcy Long at 1-800-370-3747, extension 2528 or 2572, for questions about this announcement.

### Post-Employment Restrictions

All individuals separating from federal employment are covered by specific restrictions on certain post-employment activities as detailed in the "Ethics Reform Act of 1989" (18 U.S.C. 207). Supervisors and separating employees should be aware that a general guide addressing these restrictions is included in a package of pertinent information forwarded by the Servicing Personnel Office to all separating employees. Specific questions which may arise from a review of this guide should be directed to the proper authority identified in the guide.

### Post-1956 Military Service Purchase Alert!

January 1, 1957, was the date the military went under Social Security. Since Government civilian employment allows for military service to be credited toward civilian retirement (with certain exceptions), a conflict arose concerning military service performed after December 31, 1956. Because it was earned under Social Security, it couldn't also be credited to Civil Service - if the veteran became eligible for Social Security. The solution was to allow you to buy this military time so you would be able to count it under Civil Service as well as Social Security. Procedures to accomplish this have been in place for several years. If

you were first hired before October 1, 1982, and will not become eligible for Social Security by age 62, you do not need to make the military service deposit. If you served in the military prior to January 1, 1957, you also do not need to make the deposit for the period of service that preceded January 1, 1957. If you have any questions about this, contact your Servicing Personnel Offices in Washington, DC (headquarters) and Minneapolis, MN (field) for assistance.

### 30 Percent Disabled Vet?

Employees who are designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as 30 percent or more compensably disabled must make sure the VA letter which states this designation is maintained in the Official Personnel Folder (OPF) and is no more than one year old. The Human Resources Division periodically reviews the OPF's of compensably disabled veterans to make sure VA letters reflect a current date. Written follow-up and a grace period to obtain an updated letter is provided to employees who have out-of-date letters.

### Elder Care Reminder

*Brought to you by HRD and your Employee Assistance Program (GreenSpring Health Services, Inc.)*

*Your widowed mother had a stroke and unfortunately she now requires around the clock care. She may need to be moved to a nursing home, but how do you find a good one? Is a nursing home the only option?*

*What should you do when your father becomes more and more forgetful: He can't remember if he took his medication and frequently forgets to eat?*

The average American spends 18 years caring for aging parents or other aging family. With the population of those who are 85 and older increasing three times faster

than the general population, sooner or later most of us will face, the challenge of caring for aging loved ones.

FSIS' Employee Assistance Program, through the auspices of Greenspring Health Services, Inc., has an Elder Care Program that can help you deal with issues concerning every aspect of care for the elderly. For assistance, call your EAP at 1-800-523-5668 (TDD: 1-800-882-7610).

If you need additional elder care resources, contact the FSIS Work and Family Life Coordinator, Michele Clarke, on 202-720-3880 or by e-mail. Request a copy of the Office of Personnel Management's Elder Care Handbook or ask about additional information that may help you deal with your elder care situation.

### A Good Way to Save

Saving for a child's education, retirement, vacations, a down payment on a new home or just the unexpected repairs to the washer or dryer? Well, a good way to help put money aside for these costs is by enrolling in the Payroll Savings Plan. The U.S. Savings Bonds Campaign will officially kick-off on May 15. So why not plan ahead and consider signing up for the payroll savings plan or increasing your current participation (increase the amount you save). Saving through bonds could help you achieve financial security or just help with those unexpected expenses.

When you enroll in the U.S. Savings Bonds Payroll Savings Plan, your savings are set aside for you before you receive your paycheck. For as little as \$3.75 per pay period, there are no decisions, no hassles. Today's bonds pay competitive interest rates and the interest accrues monthly. There are even more great reasons why U.S. Savings Bonds are an intelligent way to save; just ask current savers.

You will soon be receiving information about the upcoming campaign. Please take a few minutes to read about the investment advantages of Savings Bonds. You may want to check out the comparison chart for the Series I and Series EE Bonds. Or check out the [www.savingsbonds.gov](http://www.savingsbonds.gov) website for lots of interesting information and software to help you track the bonds you already own.

Your opportunity to save will soon be knocking, so don't miss your chance. When the canvasser for your organization provides you with your Savings Bonds information, take a look and decide to buy Bonds. You'll be glad you did.

### **TSP Open Season Reminder**

The next Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season begins May 15, 2000 and ends July 31, 2000. The first date that any change in your contributions or your enrollment can be effective is July 2, 2000.

Remember: All TSP-1 forms should be mailed directly to your Personnel Office;

For Headquarters employees that address is:

USDA:FSIS:HRD:ESPB  
Room 3141 – South Building  
14th & Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250

For Field employees that address is:

USDA:FSIS:HRFO  
Butler Square West, 4th Fl.  
100 North 6th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

TSP-30, Interfund Transfer Requests (to change Funds for the money you have already saved in the TSP) should be mailed directly to the TSP Service Office - address is on the form. Also Designations of Beneficiary forms for TSP should be mailed to the address on the form.

### **Changing Your TSP Funds**

As government employees we deal with forms, forms and more forms. Its easy to get them confused. Because some TSP forms are only applicable during the Open Seasons (May through July and November through January), here's a reminder as to which form to use when.

TSP-1 is used to change future allocations or fund distribution from your paycheck. It is a green form (we cannot accept copies) and must be processed by the Human Resources Division. These forms are used only during the Open Season periods.

TSP-30 is the Interfund Transfer form and changes all of the money you have already saved in the TSP to whatever funds (the G fund - Government Securities; the F fund - Fixed Income Index fund and the C fund -Common Stock fund) as you so designate on the form. This form may be used to change funds once a month. It should be mailed directly to the TSP Operations office by the 15th of the month in order to be effective at the end of that month. The address is on the form.

Interfund transfers can also be accomplished by using the TSP Thriftline; 504-255-8777. It is not a toll free call but this line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Employees are authorized to use their work phone on a reasonable basis.

To use the Thriftline to transfer your monies among the funds, you do need to know your Personal Identification Number (PIN). This number was deleted from the TSP statements in 1996. If you don't have an old statement with your PIN listed and cannot remember it, you can call the Thriftline and ask them to send it to you.

As a recap:

TSP-1 are for future payroll actions and must be mailed to:

USDA: FSIS: HRFO  
Butler Square West, 4th Floor  
100 North 6th St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

TSP-30 is for an Interfund Transfer to allocate to different funds the money you have already saved. Mail to the TSP (address is on the form).

### **OWCP Forms Reminder**

All Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) forms and medical documentation for OWCP claims are to be mailed to the Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis at the address listed above. This includes the CA-7 for compensation after your case has been accepted.

### **NFC's Employee Personal Page**

USDA employees with access to the Internet are able to view some of their own payroll, travel, and insurance data through a National Finance Center (NFC) Internet web site. NFC calls this the Employee Personal Page. Employees are reminded that this personal page is not available through Government FAIM computers.

To access the information, you will need a personal identification number (PIN), which you must request via the Internet the first time you access the Employee Personal Page, and a web browser that supports 128-bit Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption (United States version). Standard web browsers usually support only 40-bit SSL encryption, but most software developers, i.e., Microsoft, Netscape, etc., have upgrades that can be downloaded from the companies' Internet sites. NFC's web site address is <http://www.nfc.usda.gov>.

**March/April Retirements**

Richard H. Beck, Assistant Deputy Admin. Washington, DC, 03/31/2000, 40 Years

Jean V. Boltz, FI, OFO, Fredericksburg, PA, 03/31/2000, 25 Years

Elizabeth A. Coverdale, FI, OFO, Millsboro, DE, 04/08/2000, 15 Years

Betty J. Gates, FI, OFO, Dardanelle, AR, 03/25/2000, 22 Years

Ronnie H. Harvey, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Forest, MS, 03/31/2000, 21 Years

Candace S. Jones, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Dodge City, KS, 03/11/2000, 13 Years

Joanne C. Judkins, Secretary OA, Beltsville, MD, 03/31/2000, 21 Years

Verdis D. Koehlmoos, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Davenport, IA, 03/31/2000, 29 Years

Richard A. Lange, FI, OFO, Marshalltown, IA, 03/31/2000, 23 Years

Millard J. Mazted, SVMO, OFO, Marshalltown, IA, 03/31/2000, 11 Years

Ervern J. Nekolia, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Tama, IA, 04/01/2000, 35 Years

Ensebio Perez, Jr., Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Dallas, TX, 04/01/2000, 33 Years

Darlene Russell, FI, OFO, Monett, MO, 04/08/2000, 9 Years

Myrtle L. Sanford, FI, OFO Laurel, MS, 03/31/2000, 27 Years

John R. Scovill, FI, OFO, Hyrum, UT, 03/11/2000, 10 Years

Patsy C. Whitehead, Management & Program Analyst, Washington, DC, 04/02/2000, 20 Years

Alfred T. Winn, FI (Tech Center), Omaha, NE, 04/01/2000, 35 Years

Juan A. Munoz-Velazquez, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Aguadilla, PR, 04/03/2000, 30 Years

**TRAVEL**

*Editor's Note: Due to an editorial oversight in the publication of the April edition of the Beacon, the following article is being reprinted.*

**And While We're on the Subject of Travel Vouchers...**

*by Barbara McNiff*

*Budget Division*

*Telephone: 202-720-3061*

Section 301-52.7 of The Federal Travel Regulations states that employees must submit travel claims within 5 working days after the completion of a trip or period of travel, or every 30 days if you are on continuous travel status. (Directive 3810.3 states that employees should submit their vouchers promptly.) Some of our employees continue to delay the submission of their vouchers for several months or, in some cases, for several years, before presenting

them for payment. Under NFC's automated travel system an authorization has only a limited life span, at the end of which it expires. When a voucher is presented for payment after the authorization expires, a new authorization must be issued and transmitted. As we pointed out in an article in the June 1999 the *Beacon*, this causes additional work for the District office and the Financial Processing Center, and makes it very difficult for managers to budget properly if they have outstanding obligations of which they are unaware.

In the future, cases involving employees who delay the submission of their travel vouchers for extended periods of time will be referred to the Labor and Employees Relations Branch.

**To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:**

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The current and past editions of *The Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm)

**ATTACHMENT 1****Safety and Health Directives—Required Actions and Postings****FSIS Directive 3410.3, Reimbursement Provisions For Inspection Procedures**

Action: Provide inspectors with procedures for reimbursement for skid-resistant footwear, inspection equipment, and hand, wrist, and arm support devices.	Who: Inspectors are to purchase equipment in accordance with the Directive's guidelines. IIC or Supervisor approves reimbursement in accordance with the directive's guidelines.
How: Inspector completes and submits SF 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business	When: Claims must be filed by October 1 of the subsequent fiscal year.

**FSIS Directive 4791.1, Basic Occupational Safety and Health Program**

Action: Post FSIS Safety and Health Poster	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Posters are distributed to each plant by FSIS	When: Post new poster whenever contacts change.
Action: Wear head protection.	Who: Inspection personnel.
How: Wear safety helmets provided by FSIS.	When: If there is a potential for head injuries from falling objects.
Action: Post Circuit (FSIS Form 4791.2, FSIS Safety Report) and Multi-District Safety and Health Committee minutes.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Minutes are disseminated by mail to plant from District Office	When: When new minutes are received.
Action: Conduct noise monitoring and post FSIS Form 4791-20, Record of Noise Exposure	Who: The Circuit Supervisor has a noise monitoring instrument.
How: Measure noise in accordance with instructions provided by EHSB.	When: Perform initial monitoring. Remeasure noise whenever there is a change in equipment or layout.
Action: Use hearing protection devices	Who: Inspection personnel
How: Wear devices provided by FSIS	When: When noise exceeds an 8-hour-time-weighted average of 85 decibels.

**FSIS Directive 4791.3, Use of Formaldehyde in Laboratory Samples**

Action: Post Directive and Material Safety Data Sheet at locations where formaldehyde is used to preserve samples for shipping to laboratory.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Material Safety Data Sheet accompanies sample bottle from lab.	When: Whenever tissue samples or TB lesions are prepared for shipment.

**FSIS Directive 4791.5, Hazard Communication Program**

Action: Employees should be provided training or information on the list of hazardous chemicals used at the plant, the location of the material safety data sheets, container labeling, detection of chemicals, physical and health hazards of chemicals, and protective measures.	Who: District Office provides initial generic training to new employees at orientation. IIC or Supervisor provides site specific training at duty station.
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How: Complete and post Attachment #1 of directive. Train with Hazard Communication Today video and booklet and MSDS Pocket Dictionary.	When: At orientation, workplace and whenever a new hazardous chemical is introduced to workplace.
Action: Maintain a list of all hazardous chemicals procured and used by FSIS at plant	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Maintain list	When: A current listing must be maintained.
Action: Maintain copies of material safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals procured by FSIS.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: MSDS should accompany hazardous chemical.	When: MSDS should accompany first shipment of chemical to plant.
Action: Label all hazardous chemicals procured by FSIS.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Inspect containers for labels.	When: All FSIS chemicals must be labeled at all times.

#### **FSIS Directive 4791.6, Emergency Procedures in the Workplace**

Action: Develop and post a written occupant emergency plan.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: FSIS Form 4791-21, Occupant Emergency Program and	When: A plan is developed for each plant
Action: Train inspection personnel on occupant emergency plan.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Train employees on written plan.	When: Train all new employees and when there are changes in the plan.

#### **FSIS Directive 4791.7, Monitoring Employee Exposure to Occupational Radiation**

Action: Request film badge service when working with radioactive materials or radiation emanating equipment. Request discontinuance of service when no longer needed.	Who: Inspection employees assigned to plant.
How: Telephone request to field safety and health specialist.	When: Prior to the use of radioactive materials or equipment.

#### **FSIS Directive 4791.8, Air Contaminants Awareness Program**

Action: Air Contaminant monitoring	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Contact field safety and health specialist	When: When there are employee complaints

#### **FSIS Directive 4791.11, Lockout/Tagout Safety Procedures**

Action: Develop and implement cooperative agreement for lockout/tagout between FSIS and the plant.	Who: IIC, Supervisor, or Circuit Supervisor
How: Use model agreement (Attachment #1 of Directive.	When: Cooperative agreements are to be in place in large, small and very small plants.
Action: Identification on schematic or floorplan machines or equipment that are to be locked or tagged out.	Who: IIC, Supervisor and Plant Management
How: Develop schematic or floorplan with plant.	When: Implementation of lockout/tagout.

Action: Posting of lockout/tagout schematic or floorplan.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Post schematic or floorplan in USDA office.	When: Implementation of lockout/tagout program.
Action: Train "authorized" FSIS employees.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Use FSIS produced training materials.	When: Prior to performing pre-operational process verification inspection or verification of pre-operational corrective action which requires placing any body part into a machine or equipment in which the unexpected energization or release of stored energy could cause injury to the FSIS employee.
Action: Locking or tagging out machines or equipment	Who: Authorized FSIS employee
How: Place lock or tag on energy isolating device or participate in group lockout/tagout.	When: Prior to performing pre-operational verification or verification of pre-operational corrective action.
Action: Temporary removal of lockout/tagout device.	Who: Authorized FSIS employee.
How: Remove lock or tag.	When: Testing or positioning machines or equipment.
Action: Periodic inspection of energy control procedures.	Who: Circuit supervisor or designee.
How: Review between supervisor and authorized employees.	When: First quarter of calendar year.
Action: Authorized employee retraining	Who: IIC, Supervisor or Circuit Supervisor
How: Use FSIS produced training materials.	When: Changes in machines or equipment or lockout/tagout procedures or the authorized employee can not demonstrate proficiency in lockout/tagout.
Action: Certification that authorized inspection personnel are proficient in lockout/tagout.	Who: IIC, Supervisor, or Circuit Supervisor
How: Submit letter to District Office that inspectors are proficient in lockout/tagout and retraining has been conducted.	When: Annually in January.
Action: Training records.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Maintain records of employee training.	When: Whenever training is conducted.
Action: Notifying plant management of withdrawal of inspection personnel from plant or areas if plant does not have or does not properly lockout or tagout machines or equipment.	Who: Inspector performing lockout/tagout.
How: Inform plant management and leave plant of plant area.	When: Plant does not have or has not properly implemented lockout/tagout.
Action: Document serious hazard when does not have or does not properly implement lockout/tagout.	Who: Inspector performing lockout/tagout.
How: Complete and submit FSIS Form 4791-27, Report of Alleged Safety or Health Hazard to supervisor.	When: Plant does not have or has not properly implemented lockout/tagout.

### **FSIS Directive 4791.12, Reporting and Correcting Occupational Hazards**

Action: Reporting a safety or health hazard.	Who: Inspector observing hazard or authorized representative.
How: Complete and submit FSIS Form 4791-27, Report of Alleged Safety or Health Hazard to IIC or supervisor.	When: Whenever a hazard or unsafe or unhealthful condition is observed.



Complainant retains copy 6.	
Action: Conduct inspection or investigation of reported hazard	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Performs investigation or inspection.	When: 24 hours for reports of imminent danger, 3 working days for serious hazards, and 20 working days for other than serious hazards.
Action: Provides inspection or investigation findings to complainant. Notifies complainant if an inspection or investigation will not be conducted.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Prepares response on FSIS Form 4791-27, Report of Alleged Safety or Health Hazard. Provides copy 2 to complainant. IIC or supervisor retains copy 1.	When: Within 30 calendar days of completion of inspection or investigation. Within 15 calendar days if an inspection or investigation will not be conducted.
Action: Provide inspection/investigation findings to field safety and health specialist through supervisory channels for review and comment.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Send copies 3 through 5 of FSIS Form 4791-27 through Circuit Supervisor and District Office to field safety and health specialist. Specialist reviews actions and remarks to date and retains copy 3. Copy 4 is sent to complainant and copy 5 to the IIC or Supervisor.	When: After completion of inspection or investigation.
Action: Document hazards	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Completes FSIS Form 4791.22, Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions and posts on bulletin board until condition is corrected or 3 working days whichever is longer.	When: When hazard can not be corrected during inspection.
Action: Develop a written abatement plan	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: In accordance with Attachment # 2-4 of FSIS Directive 4791.12.	When: When abatement can not be completed within 30 calendar days of issuance of FSIS Form 4791-22.
Action: Maintain log of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Complete FSIS Form 4791-26, Log of Reported Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions	When: Whenever an unsafe or unhealthful working condition is reported.

### **FSIS Directive 4791.13, Workplace Inspections, and Injury, Illness and Motor Vehicle Incident Reporting**

Action: Perform workplace safety and health inspections.	Who: IIC, Supervisor or an employee designated by IIC or Supervisor.
How: Use FSIS Form 4791-23, Safety and Health Checklist, Office Facilities and FSIS Form 4791-24, Plant Facilities to record inspection findings.	When: At least annually.
Action: Issue Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions	Who: IIC or Supervisor
Complete and Post FSIS Form 4791-22, Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions. Post Notice for 3 working days or until condition is abated, which ever is later.	When: Unsafe or unhealthful working conditions can not be abated at time of inspection,

Action: Prepare an abatement plan.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: See FSIS Directive 4791.12, Attachment #2-4 for instructions.	When: Abatement will take 30 calendar days or longer.
Action: Post OSHA Notices of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Post Notices on bulletin board for 3 working days or until the violation is abated, whichever is longer.	When: OSHA conducts inspection at workplace and issues Notice.
Action: Prepare and maintain a log of workplace injuries or illnesses.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Enter data on FSIS Form 4791-17, Log of Federal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses	When: Within 6 working days of receiving information about incident.
Action: Post yearly totals of injuries and illnesses on bulletin board.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Post yearly totals of FSIS Form 4791-17, Log of Federal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.	When: Within 45 calendar days of end of fiscal year for 30 consecutive days.
Action: Enter Establishment Number on compensation forms.	Who: Injured Employee
How: Enter number on CA-1, Federal Employees' Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation or CA-2, Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation when applicable,	When: Whenever CA-1 or CA-2 is submitted.
Action: Code occupation code, type and source of injury codes, zip code, and OWCP agency code on compensation forms.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Code CA-1 or CA-2.	When: Whenever CA-1 or CA-2 is submitted.
Action: Report motor vehicle accidents.	Who: Driver
How: Completes Form SF-91, Motor Vehicle Report, Obtains statements from witness on Form SF-94, Statement of Witness, Completes Form AD-112, Report of Unserviceable, Lost, or Damaged Property if there is damage to government owned or leased vehicle. Notifies GSA Fleet Management Center if the vehicle is leased from GSA. Completes and submits CA-1 if injured.	When: Accident while on official business.
Action: Report motor vehicle accidents.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Completes Form SF-91, Form AD-112. and Form CA-1. Obtains Form SF-94 from driver. Submits copies of Forms SF-91 and SF-94 to the GSA Fleet Management Center if the vehicle is leased from the GSA. Submits original copies of Forms SF-91 and SF-94 and Form AD-112 to the Office of Management's Administrative Services Division. Submits Form CA-1 to the Human Resources Division in Minneapolis.	When: Accident when on official business.
Action: Report of serious incident.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Notify local OSHA office and the Chief, Environmental, Health and Safety Branch within 8 hours	When: Job related fatality or hospitalization of 3 or more persons and at least one is an FSIS employee.

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of incident.	
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**FSIS Directive 4992.1, First Aid**

Action: Provide first aid training and first aid kit at the work location.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Obtain first aid training from local sources and first aid kits through the Central Supply Stores catalog.	When: The work location is 15 minutes or more from a first aid facility, infirmary, clinic, or hospital which are use for the treatment of injured employees.
Action: Post emergency telephone numbers.	Who: IIC or Supervisor
How: Complete and post near telephone FSIS Form 4792-1, In Case of an Emergency	When: In all plant USDA plant offices.
Action: (Optional) Complete and carry wallet emergency information card.	Who: Employee
How: Complete FSIS Form 4792.2, Emergency Information Care	When: As needed.

## ATTACHMENT 2

**C, F, and G Fund Monthly Returns**  
**April 10, 2000**

<b>Months</b>	<b>C Fund</b>	<b>S&amp;P 500 Stock Index</b>	<b>F Fund</b>	<b>Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate Bond Index</b>	<b>G Fund</b>
<b>1995</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>37.41%</b>	37.58%	<b>18.31%</b>	18.47%	<b>7.03%</b>
<b>1996</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>22.85%</b>	22.96%	<b>3.66%</b>	3.63%	<b>6.76%</b>
<b>1997</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>33.17%</b>	33.36%	<b>9.60%</b>	9.65%	<b>6.77%</b>
<b>1998</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>28.44%</b>	28.58%	<b>8.70%</b>	8.69%	<b>5.74%</b>
<b>1999</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>20.95%</b>	21.04%	<b>(0.85%)</b>	(0.82%)	<b>5.99%</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
April	3.86	3.87	.29	.32	.46
May	(2.36)	(2.36)	(0.89)	(0.88)	.47
June	5.54	5.55	(0.33)	(0.32)	.49
July	(3.14)	(3.12)	(0.43)	(0.42)	.52
August	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.05)	(0.05)	.53
September	(2.78)	(2.74)	1.15	1.16	.51
October	6.34	6.33	.38	.37	.53
November	2.00	2.03	(0.01)	(0.01)	.51
December	5.90	5.89	(0.45)	(0.48)	.54
<b>2000</b>					
January	(5.03)	(5.02)	(0.34)	(0.33)	.56
February	(1.93)	(1.89)	1.22	1.21	.53
March	9.74	9.78	1.32	1.32	.55
<b>Last 12 Months *</b>	<b>17.74</b>	17.94	<b>1.86</b>	1.87	<b>6.37</b>

Percentages in ( ) are negative.

The C Fund is invested in the Barclays Equity Index Fund which tracks the S&P 500 stock index. The F Fund is invested in the Barclays U.S. Debt Index Fund which tracks the Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate bond index. The G Fund is invested in special issues of U.S. Treasury securities.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent net earnings for the month, after deduction of accrued administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The C, F, and G Fund monthly returns are dollar-weighted: they reflect net earnings on the changing balances invested during the month.

**\* The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.**

The C and F Fund returns vary from the index returns because of C and F Fund expenses, changing balances in the C and F Funds, and differences in returns between the Barclays funds and the underlying indexes. The index returns are time-weighted: they assume constant dollar balances invested during each month and throughout the period.

Future performance of the three funds will vary and may be significantly different from the returns shown above. See the "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" for detailed information about the funds and their investment risks.